

Re: S.154: Threats and Violent Conduct

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Healthcare Stakeholders

- Primary resource for evaluation and treatment of agitated individuals
- Accountable for outcomes
 - Impose clinical decisions
 - Threat mitigation and violence prevention
- Threats of violence and assault are healthcare occupational hazards

High Risk Factors

- Substance abuse
- Prior violent conduct
- Untreated mental health disorders
- Limited education
 - Low verbal ability
 - Cognitive deficits
- No prior criminal convictions

The Relevance of Threats

- Explicit threats forewarn future violence (1)
- Among certain populations, threats a robust predictor of future violence (2)
- False negatives: Violent conduct *without* threats 15-20 % (3)
 - i.e., 80-85% victims experienced threats of violence before assault
- Victims who were threatened ~ 300% more likely to be assaulted than those who were not threatened (4)

Perpetrators

- Do not necessarily have prior convictions
 - Warren 2008: Among group with highest risk of future offense
 - (conviction of *threat of violence* only prior offense)
- 44% convicted of violent offense within 10 years (1)
- 22.9% assault rate within 12 months (including 1 homicide)
(5)
 - *Not always to individual(s) threatened*

Summary

- Criminal threatening a predictor of increased risk of violence
 - Not only to threatened individual, but to population
- There are known risk factors
 - Some modifiable
- Need to identify and prosecute high risk individuals
 - opportunities to treat and mitigate risk factors
 - prevent violent outcomes

- 1. Warren L, Mullen P, et al. (2008) Threats to kill: A follow-up study. *Psych Med* 378, 599-605.
- 2. McEwan T, Mullen P, Purcell R. (2007) Identifying risk factors for stalking: A review of current research. *Int J Law and Psych*, 30, 1-9.
- 3. Meloy J, Rivers L, et al. (2000) A replication study of obsessional followers and offenders with mental disorders. *J Forensic Sci* 45, 147-152.
- 4. Mullen P, Pathe M, Purcell R. (2009) *Stalkers and their victims* (2nd ed.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 5. Warren L, Mullen P, Ogloff J. (2011) A clinical study of those who utter threats to kill *Behav Sci Law*, 29, 141-154